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AGRICULTURE

Bost Airstrip Opens in Hilmand: On June 3, 2009, the United States, in partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Transportation and Civil Aviation (MoTCA), opened Lashkar Gah's Bost Airstrip in Hilmand Province. Now a 2,000-meter paved runway, Bost is the only completely civilian airstrip in southern Afghanistan. The airstrip will enable the reestablishment of commercial air service to Hilmand, opening the province to economic development and facilitating the export of agricultural products.



U.S. Ambassador Eikenberry and Hilmand Governor Mangal celebrate the opening of the Bost Airstrip.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

At the opening ceremony, Hilmand Governor Alhaj Gulab Mangal thanked the United States, noting that

"The Bost Airstrip is a demonstration of America's commitment to the Afghan people." U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry expressed his support, responding that, "The United States is proud to support large-scale civilian development projects for the people of Hilmand."

Adjacent to the Bost airstrip, the United States is building the 33-hectare Hilmand Agriculture Center, an agriculture-specific industrial park. Once completed, the center is expected to create 2,500 direct jobs for local residents.



Kuchi and Hazara leaders address landaccess issues through peaceful negotiation. PHOTO: USAID/PEACE

Resolving Land Access Issues through Peaceful Negotiation: In Bamyan Province, land access has been a contentious issue among Hazara and nomadic Kuchi residents for more than 100 years. USAID and Texas A&M University have been working with these groups to resolve major land-use conflicts through mediation and peaceful negotiation. To date, 90 Kuchi and Hazara community leaders have participated in workshops to learn negotiation techniques, gaining practical experience in peaceful methods to resolve disputes.

Ten participants now serve as Peace Ambassadors for their communities, and since April 2009 have been working together to achieve a long-lasting, grassroots

resolution to land-use conflicts. Thanks to USAID efforts, these previously opposing groups have been able to identify common ground and are working towards a peaceful solution to a once intractable conflict. Visit www.afghanpeace.org for more information.



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The ibex is now one of Afghanistan's protected species.

PHOTO: Wildlife Conservation Society

Afghanistan's Endangered Species Gain Legal Protection: Afghanistan's rare and endangered animals – such as the snow leopard and Marco Polo sheep – are now legally protected from hunting, thanks to USAID and Wildlife Conservation Society efforts. On June 3, Afghanistan's National Environment Protection Agency (NEPA) announced the establishment of the country's first protected species list, which includes 33 threatened and endangered birds, plants, insects, amphibians, and mammals. The protected species list comes at a critical time for Afghanistan's wildlife, as a Presidential Decree banning hunting in the country expired in March 2009.

Afghanistan is home to a wide mix of wildlife unlike any in the world, and protecting it is essential to preserving the country's unique biodiversity. The endangered species list is still being expanded through a unique collaboration between USAID, Kabul University, and the University of Richmond in Virginia. Students majoring in environmental studies assess proposed species, make recommendations, and then participate in joint electronic discussion sessions with the Afghan Wildlife Executive Committee (AWEC) – the official body established to create species lists.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Communities Take Hold of Their Own
Development through Road Construction: USAID
provides small grants to communities that develop
strong proposals for local development projects. In
Dalilee, Baghlan Province, community leaders
prioritized road construction and received funding to
build 2 km of road in the area. However, the
community went further than the original plan and built
8 km of road. Now, 16 small villages are connected to
a well-built road, providing residents with increased
access to health care, education, markets, and
government services. The necessary construction
equipment remains with the community and it plans to
continue road-building efforts.



Dalilee community members inspect their new road, which includes a vehicle bridge. PHOTO: USAID/PRT Baghlan

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EDUCATION

Teachers Learn Ways to Make Class Engaging:

USAID is helping Afghanistan's primary school teachers design better lessons for their students, and to deliver those lessons in a way that reaches students more effectively. More than 38,000 primary school educators in 11 provinces have received training on how to make their lessons interactive and to involve their students in the learning process.

The training has already changed how teachers run their classrooms. Mrs. Shafiqa, a teacher at the Doaba Village Girls' Primary School in Sari Pul, says, "Before attending this USAID training, I [did] not consider the attention and understanding of students



Mrs. Shafiqa studies her notes during a USAID teacher training session.
PHOTO: USAID/BESST

in the class [to be] very important, but after I attended the training, I learned many methods to see if the students were understanding what is being taught." Shafiqa, who teaches second grade, added, "One method I learned during training is intentionally to write words with incorrect spelling on the blackboard and then ask the students if they see errors and to correct those errors by themselves."



Students at this primary school in rural Ghor province now have the opportunity to learn from a skilled teacher.

PHOTO: USAID/PACE-A/Najibullah Attiqi

Improving Education in Rural Afghanistan: To help the Afghan Ministry of Education educate 75% of boys and 60% of girls by 2010, USAID helps establish primary school classes in the most remote areas of the country. From deep into the Hindu Kush to far beyond the Kunar River banks, many Afghan children can now receive an education in their home village.

Although some geographical barriers have been eliminated, there is still a lack of educated and trained teachers willing to teach in these remote areas. To ensure that students have teachers, communities often select their most educated inhabitant to run the school. These novice teachers then receive support to help them educate their classes, such as visits from

teacher trainers. Recently, USAID created a new guide for teacher trainers, which has enabled them to provide effective tools and assistance with lesson planning, teaching methods, and classroom discipline. Even in isolated areas, more Afghan children now have the opportunity to receive a quality education.

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A Kabul University student learns to use a fire extinguisher during safety training.

PHOTO: The Asia Foundation

Safety Comes First at Kabul University's National Women's Dormitory: Students living at Kabul University's National Women's Dormitory are now ready to react to emergencies such as fires and earthquakes. In early May, USAID conducted emergency measures response training for over 500 students and staff. The training included classroom lectures and hands-on exercises including earthquake drills, emergency evacuation, and basic fire extinguisher drills. "This training is very important to the safety of my girls and I am very happy that USAID was able to provide this – it could save lives in the future," said the dormitory manager.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Corporatization of State-owned Enterprise to Improve Water and Sanitation in Kabul: On May 31, 2009, the Afghan Government transferred the Kabul Department of the Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewage (CAWSS) to a new corporation, the Afghan Urban Water Supply and Sewage Corporation (AUWSSC). The corporatization process takes poorly functioning public companies, and transforms them into organizations that provide better services – like clean water and sanitation – to the Afghan people. With USAID support, CAWSS was the first state-owned enterprise in Afghanistan to be restructured as a corporation, with more effective and efficient operational, commercial, and financial management.



Dr. Jalil Shams, Minister of Economy (left); Prince Mostapha Zaher, General Director of the National Environmental Protection Agency (center); and Dr. Omar Zakhilwal, Minister of Finance (right) exchange the CAWSS transfer memorandum.

PHOTO: USAID/Katya Sienkiewicz

The transfer included more than \$31.4M in assets and \$3.4M in liabilities, including 66 individual pieces of land with associated buildings, 43 wells, 18 reservoirs, and more than 600 kilometers of the water transfer network. The corporatization of CAWSS is a significant step in the creation of a more effective and comprehensive water and sanitation service supply in urban Afghanistan. Kabul residents will enjoy better access to clean water and sanitation services, as well as a more sustainable water supply, which will strengthen public health and hygiene. Improved wastewater management practices will also help to protect and preserve the environment in Kabul and surrounding areas.

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DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Afghanistan Technical and Vocational Institute Hosts Second Annual Graduation and Career Fair:

The Afghanistan Technical and Vocational Institute (ATVI) held its second graduation ceremony and career fair on May 27, 2009. The 856 graduates had completed an intensive year-long training program in construction, information and communications technology, agriculture, or horticulture – all burgeoning industries suffering from a shortage of skilled labor in Afghanistan.

A career fair followed the graduation ceremony, attended by representatives from many of Afghanistan's leading firms. The fair allowed the skilled graduates to connect with potential employers for interviews and placement. "Job creation is critical



U.S. Ambassador Eikenberry congratulates an ATVI graduate. PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

to the advancement of Afghanistan," noted Ambassador Karl Eikenberry in his commencement address. "The capable graduates of ATVI represent the raw material needed to fulfill such employment opportunities. Together with business leaders, they will provide Afghanistan with the skilled labor force it needs in order to develop."



Bamyan's civil servants receive their certificates.

PHOTO: USAID/Katya Sienkiewicz

Building the Capacity of Bamyan's Civil Servants:

On May 28, 2009, the Bamyan Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) Provincial Training Center graduated its second class. In just over a year since opening, this unique civil service training institute has provided Bamyan's provincial government with almost 120 newly trained civil servants, including the 38 students in the recent graduating class.

For six months, the graduates took courses in English, management, and computer science, and now have the knowledge and confidence to apply their new skills in the workplace. Together, the

graduates of the IARCSC Provincial Training Center will play a key role in the work being carried out to develop Bamyan's provincial government. They will be able to use their new skills to contribute actively to public administration reform – an essential effort in a democratic Afghanistan.